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Chapter I

General Ethnographic Data on the Pemón Indians

1. They are Karibe /Carib/ Indians. 2. The denomination Koto. 3. The name Arekuna. 4. Id. Taupépán. 5. Id. Pemón. 6. Number of individuals. 7. Conterminous and neighboring tribes. 8. Moral and intellectual states. 9. Ethnographic characteristics.

123 1. The first thing that we customarily ask each individual with whom we are going to enter into conversation is his name or his gracia. Hence I judge it very apt to find out the name of the tribe about whose general characteristics I am going to speak in the present work, which is set on an ethnographic and a psychological plane at the same time.

101 Depending upon the glottological criterion, today prevalent, and, even more, adhering to the linguistic principle that "the briefest subject is the oldest," we easily arrive at the conclusion that these Indians are of the Caribe race, and of the most primitive, with primacy perhaps over the very Bakairí proposed by Von Steinen as the primigenous.

[114] A simple glance at a linguistic map, e.g., that of Fr. W. Schmidt, S. V. D., will make us see that these Indians belong to the "Roroima group." This group is at present the most numerous and dense of all; and the Roroima is the orographic knot about which are grouped more natives, emanating from the prolific Caribe trunk, since the other groups "of the Orinoco" and "of the Islands" have almost entirely disappeared through absorption or other causes.

101 114 But the Karibe of the Roroima group are subdivided into numerous tribes, about the classification and nomenclature of which there reigns great divergency among writers, principally because of the following factors:

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175 French and English have been propelling their respective cultural
177 influences toward the heart of Guiana.

8. Since when I talk about these Indians I might seem
partial because of the great affection which I have for them
and which they similarly have for me, I prefer to yield the floor
to the illustrious ethnologist of Stuttgart, who asserts that the
Taurepán Indians are the most pleasant, intelligent, /5/ and
even the most physically perfect among all of the natives whom
he came to know in his many excursions through the South
American continent.

157 In a propaganda article I recall having written: "These
Indians are pleasant in their dealings, in their manners, and in
their language; they are hospitable, they are suspicious but
never hostile toward strangers; they have a great love for their
land, for their rivers, and for the places where they live, and
they are very fond of pondering its beauties and like it very
much when others praise them."

Elsewhere I also wrote and must repeat here: "With regard
to their intellectual qualities I believe, as do most missionaries,
that these Indians are not dull of wit nor lacking in morality.
They have undoubtedly an excess of imagination with the con-
sequences thereof, this being a characteristic of all who live
in direct contact with, and as though absorbed by, virgin nature.
The lack of stimulus toward all that is outside their ancestral
standard or canon of life has given rise to their being called
lazy or indolent, which we believe an unjust bad report."

114 9. The ethnographic or racial characteristics of the Pemón
Indians can be examined in these words, which in the interest
of greater brevity I copy from Dr. Simpson: "They subsist
principally on cassava and ají; and they use tobacco; they use
blowguns and poison arrows; they poison rivers to catch fish;
they build semipermanent houses and sleep in hammocks;
originally they did not wear clothing or only a simple loincloth;
formerly they practiced empollamiento /breeding, hatching"/

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/XI/

DEDICATION

114 These psychological-ethnographic commentaries, arising from questions that were asked me about the Pemón Indians of the Gran Sabana and which I could only answer through my assiduous observation of their customs and thoughts during my long stay among them and through the freedom they gave me to penetrate into the sanctuary of their souls; are dedicated paternally to the Pemón Indians themselves.

123 Not only did they answer my questions simply and let themselves be observed without suspicion, since I lived among
212 them "quasi unus ex illis"; there were those who, taught by us, answered by writing in their own language to avoid errors and so that the narration might flow naturally and spontaneously; so that in many cases I am a mere translator.

121 Although grouped with some logical order, these commentaries do not constitute a complete ethnographic study by any means; psychological observations predominate and I frequently bring into the mainstream /of my work/ proverbs of perennial philosophy and the tried statements of eminent thinkers to add flavor to my poor lucubrations.

Let them, thus, go into the hands of those who love the natives as precursors and beginnings of other, vaster studies, which shall be presented to the public view under the initials E. V. I. (Estudios Venezolanos Indígenas /Venezuelan Native Studies/), should we be granted the time and means, for we live at the frontier and in the front line of the missions.

Machiques, May 1, 1946.

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291 *This is the so-called taurón, or*
140 cont./
789 charm for sandals or for face paintings before going on a trip
302 so that Amarinak will not see us, for he is the spirit of fainting
484 spells, epileptic attacks, etc.

(Written down in Pemón by the same person.)

000 The Egyptian magic formula against burns says as follows:

"Thy son, Horus, burns upon the mountain. -- Is there water there? -- No, there is not. -- There is water in my mouth, the Nile is between my legs. I am going to extinguish the fire. (These words are said over the /plate appears here/ /41/ milk of one who has given birth to a child, over seeds, over sheep's wool. It is applied to the burn.)"

126 Many of the times when I was collecting their charms for
753 study, they would tell me with all innocence and candor that
123 these were the remedies that God had provided them with.
And when I put it to them how was it that we, thanks to a moderate life and to medicines, were healthier than they, they replied that this was not due to medicines but to the many prayers which the Fathers knew.

90. Indian mothers, extremely loving and as devoted as any woman to their children, on several occasions attributed the coincidental illness of their children to the evil influence of paper (karetá) or the slips of paper on which they saw us writing their names; either because they considered the paper itself to be mysterious, or perhaps because they believed that the tender soul of the children might become stuck to the paper. Others, by contrast, attributed the well-being of their newborn to blowing, salt, crosses, and other baptismal ceremonies.

All this that I say is naturally now coming to be understood, since, thanks to God, these false impressions are gradually being set aside, founded as they were in the paralogisms of magic, and the distinction between spiritual religion and corporal medicine is coming to be understood.

/66 cont. /

660 142. Upon dealing with this subject, we have accidentally had come to mind the story of that first fratricide, who was not satisfied with the promise of God that he would not die a perfidious death and thus lived an errant and fugitive life on earth, persecuted by the voice of blood.

And although we said at the beginning that the Indians are thoroughly imbued with the concept of Kanaima, it is hoped that little by little they will be abandoning it, since if they were at one time perfidious and bloody in their vengeance, now we have redeemed them from their barbarism, they have the right to enjoy that peace promised to men of good will.

143. To convince the Indians, and those who may read this, of the ideas here expounded, we are going to relate a few facts that we know with certainty.

797 a) On a certain occasion a missionary, who was inspecting
123 their agriculture, thinking exactly about this matter of the
776 Kanaima, tried to imitate the whistle that the Indians attribute
781 to him, with such success and with such bad luck that an Indian
who happened to have gone to get water, dropping the camaza,
took off running like a buck, and crying in a loud voice got
into the hammock shaking with fever.

123 b) Some travelers, camped near the Kamá waterfall and
776 who were accompanied by Indians, out of idleness got the idea
781 of shouting "Kanaima, Kanaima," and then, however hard they
tried to persuade the Indians that it had been a joke, it was not
possible to do so, since the Indians swore that they had seen him
and they spent the rest of the night in painful vigil. /67/

159 c) A few years ago there in Akurimá lived two Indians,
776 called Joaquín and Alberto; the first, who had a very bad pre-
578 vious history, since with other companions he had killed three
civilized persons while they were sleeping, wanted to wreak
vengeance on the second, with whom he had had a strong
altercation. For this purpose he put on the clothing in which
his mother had given birth to him, painted himself up well with
annatto and other cosmetics, and in this strange form presented

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Chapter XVIII

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Are the Indians Grateful or Ungrateful?

154. A universal complaint. 155. Beggary. 156. Ingratitude through ignorance. 157. The legend of Makunaimá and of the Government. 158. There are no gifts among Indians. 159. Practical advice. 160. Pleasant memories.

154. One of the proverbs most widely spread against the Indians is the one which is contained like gall in its bladder in the thousand times repeated quatrain:

The Indian flees from work
And looks for idleness:
Where they beat him up, he stays,
Where they pay him, he goes away.

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577 This matter of ingratitude is more than a common, universal complaint of all against all others. And the fact is that since "gratitude is an interminable debt," -- (for which reason it is very correctly said that money is worth more than favors), many make excessive use of their gifts, by always and endlessly asking for the loan of services. As a result of which there exists that other little verse:

"Give him always, don't give him one;
You haven't given him anything." /72/

which is a two-edged blade, which cuts equally ingrates and the excessively demanding.

155. Another very similar thing and one which many confuse with ingratitude is excessive asking for favors, from which doubtless missionaries and Indians suffer. However, I [123] myself, who a great many times have suffered the bother of this defect (?) of the Indians through not being able to remedy

172 cont. /

431 it with gifts, serenely ask: What other thing can and must we
577 poor people do but beg? What should dry earth do but sit up
● [123] and open its mouth in demand for water?

571 Nor will anyone deny that splendid and generous people
are rare; and in the face of this undeniable fact of miserliness,
there is no other remedy than to be beggarly. "A stubborn
poor person extracts a crumb of bread." For this reason also
the natives often endure punishment and maltreatment, which
they did not go looking for (where they beat them they remain)
and they go away when they have received their pay, because
this is precisely what they came looking for and what they have
been working for. And we would be presumptuous in the ex-
treme if, because we pay the Indians, we should want to keep
them indefinitely at our side and in our service.

600 156. Wisely did Father Eulogio warn that "the uncivilized
Indian does not show gratitude in any way," and this is due to
ignorance of our ways of life, our industries, and our business
ways.

829 Another missionary, Father Baltasar de Matallana, also
171 says that such Indians "believe that shotguns loaded with shot
and powder rained down from heaven on us." Another humorist,
an explorer of mines in all the Guianas, assured me that the
natives imagined that we were born with money in our pockets,
just as they were born with lice in their hair and fleas on their
feet.

829 And that is why it turned out to be unproductive, when we
123 brought Indians to Caracas, to take them to the shops and ware-
houses, since they couldn't understand why, out of so many
pieces of cloth, so many ready-made clothes exposed to their
avid glances, so many dozens of suitcases, axes, and other
tools, not a single meter was ever cut off for them, that no-
body ever gave them a garment, nor let them take away what,
apparently, was more than enough for the others.

538 157. The old Indians also have the legendary belief that
829 their ancient predecessors, the Makunaimá, extremely able,

/13 cont. /

431 Practice has taught us not to accept any gift from them or
●123 to try to pay them back immediately with another gift; since
437 were we to do otherwise 50 years later they would ask us for a
corresponding payment. And this does not only apply to gifts
offered by the natives to civilized persons, but also to those
that they make among themselves. As a result the most re-
flective and delicate Indians (and there are such), when they
are guests, try to pay back their hosts by helping them in their
usual chores, bringing some game or fish, carrying firewood
or water, etc. This observation has been expressly made to
me by them and shows the delicacy of some of them not to be
obligated and in others the fear of being recriminated for favors
received completely gratis.

159. With respect to the matter under consideration, we
must reiterate as very practical advice in dealing with the
natives the following:

1. Not to accept any gift without the appropriate paying
back of it. /14/
2. The best way to be freed of their demands, when this
is a nuisance to us and we don't have any way of quiet-
ing it, is for us to ask for anything they may have.
3. When we stay among them we must lend a hand with
the common loads or the expenses of food, and thus
we shall be free from their recriminations.

123 On a certain occasion some Indians of a certain place made
437 me a gift of some pineapples, which I immediately had peeled
and divided among them themselves. Hardly had they eaten
when the splendid donor came to ask me for bread; the pine-
apples belonged to the women and they wanted some little
combs, which I didn't have. Then I divided among them all
a half pound of chocolate, the pieces of which were a very
good equivalent for the rings of pineapple; and as the women
also ate, I asked them in payment for a wanck for carrying
children. As they had not received the little combs, they

/74 cont. /

● 123 didn't want to give me the uenek -- straps in which they carry
437 children across their chest --; but thus we all remained at peace.

123 160. Among Indians and non-Indians not all acts of fondness are disinterested; you might almost say that it's rare to find one which is. Not all kindnesses are gratitude, either. In any case, looking at the other face of the Indians, I see myself obliged to remember many sincere demonstrations of affection; principally on trips, many services and attentions on the part of those already educated by us in the mission, as well as extraordinary diligence and they themselves taking risks and dangers in floods in the rivers and during great rainshowers and submitting themselves to getting very wet and uncomfortable in order to free us from the same problems.

000 As a salutary and ascetic piece of advice, we must remember that the Lord giveth and doth not take away. And for this reason Quevedo said that it is a sign of a great spirit and an almost divine one to give favors without expecting recompense nor thanks. And Amado Nervo also wrote: "Miserly spirits are always lamenting the ingratitude of others; in contrast, generous souls are always surprised when they are thanked."

Chapter XIX

Do The Indians Educate Their Children?

161. A question. 162. Practical teaching. 163. Oral teaching. 164. The bogeyman. 165. Punishments. 166. Marriages. 167. Rules of etiquette.

861 161. In the letter from which we take this question, we were asked expressly to deal with the correction of the /75/ children and whether their parents punish their children or not, and what type of punishments are applied to them.

/88 cont. /

621 from epú, "handle, holder." It is very possible that in sporadic
622 cases, for example when afraid of being attacked, when a
stranger approaches, when setting off on a long journey, etc.,
there may have come forth or may come forth a leader, one
less cowardly, more intelligent, etc., but, the danger passed,
the external circumstance, they return to their own way of
life, in which there are no juridical ties beyond the strictly
family ones.

592 192. It is true that the active, friendly hospitable, etc.,
621 Indian with initiative is likeable and that there customarily
622 gather about him several other families, either in individual
houses or even in large communal houses, but even then
divided up into hearths or fireplaces with all of the culinary
utensils, fishing and hunting equipment, etc., the property of
each family. Thus not even in this case does the agglutinator-
individual have authority over the others, but only a greater
or lesser degree of persuasion for adjusting disputes and argu-
ments.

628 From settlement to settlement the same phenomenon
571 occurs; the only tie is the bond of relationship and of friend-
ship, a tie which weakens with distance until in the far distance
it becomes distrust and suspicion, never gratuitous aggression.

571 193. Mutual fear does not usually interfere much in the
578 group, since in such a case they rather seek peace /two
plates appear here/ /89/ by putting land between them. And
these Indians can surely say better even than Castellians:
"Broad is my land!" In this same sense unsociable Indians or
those who are fond of solitude and of avoiding womanly scoldings
● [123] isolate themselves or go off to a convenient distance. This
was the reason that they continually put forward to me when
I invited them to gather together more: "Separated we do not
fight and occasional visits are more pleasant and welcome."

127 It is for this reason that a careful census of this whole
162 region carried out in the years 1940 and 1942, which included

551/177 Practically all of the adult men of this group have such names. Small children ordinarily do not and a few young men or adolescents do not. Of 23 females recorded in detail, only 6 lacked Spanish names and 4 of these were young girls. On the other hand, as far as noted, none of the allied Indians from outside the central group have Spanish names. The Indians without Spanish names at first maintained, without exception, that they had no names at all. Later, 551 [123] when more intimate relationships were established, it was admitted that all do have Indian names, but even then all my informants absolutely refused to reveal what these were in any instance.¹⁰³ The Indians seldom address each other by name, rarely by a Spanish name and, as far as I could learn, never by a true Indian name unless in the utmost family privacy.

The reluctance of most Indians, and especially Caribs and Arawaks, to use or even to reveal their personal names, even among Indians and of course especially to foreigners, is well known. See for instance Koch-Grünberg (1923, Vol. III, pp. 140 seq.), who found this to be true among the Taurepánes. The feeling seems to be that this name is an essential part of the personality, the ego, which suffers when it is revealed, and that knowledge of it also confers power which may be used against the owner. The Kamarakotos certainly [123] have this feeling to a high degree. Possibly in this case it is reenforced by the desire of the cacique to make his tribe appear as "civilized" as possible and I suspect that he prohibited the revelation of any Indian names. The usual reason given, however, for refusal to reveal an Indian name was that it would "hurt" the person named.

Caribs do ordinarily have nicknames, as opposed to personal names, which are also generally used only rarely and with care but which are at least [123] known to all members of the tribe. In conversation I heard Kamarakotos use words apparently of address, in some cases animal names, that I believe to be Indian nicknames, but I did not confirm this because to attempt to do so would [177] have destroyed their frankness in speaking before me. In fact what seems to have happened in the central group is that Spanish names are now used essentially [797] as nicknames or in substitution for Indian nicknames. Two or three Kamarakotos who had been in Venezuelan settlements claimed to have been baptized. [553] The cacique has given names to some of his people and others have received them as presents from travelers or have conferred them on themselves.¹⁰⁴ Some have only one Spanish name, but others use both given names and surnames. 551 The European system of hereditary surnames is quite foreign to any Indians and 553 the surnames in use among the Kamarakotos are not really employed as such, a son does not take his father's surname nor does a wife take her husband's. In one case brother and sister did use the same surname, but she retained this and did not exchange or add her husband's when she married, nor did she give her or her husband's surname to their children. Brothers do not necessarily have the same surname, nor do father and son.

103, 104 [see footnotes on p. 319, category 116 - Analysis]
A A

●123 While we were camped near Uruyén as many as forty Indian visitors
574 were sometimes present at Uruyén at one time and every structure there was
573 crowded with hammocks, including the wall-less B, although Kamarakotos
784 dislike sleeping without walls, but even under this pressure no one occupied F
or G or used them for any purpose.

Food

262 The Kamarakotos will eat practically everything available in their region
433 from which humans can extract any nourishment, but their main reliance is on
241 agriculture. Wild food, plant and animal, plays a valued part in their diet
but its failure is not fatal. Cultivated plants are the staple foods, and their
failure means starvation. Contrary to the general impression, it is extremely
difficult and precarious to live off the country in the tropical jungles and
sabanas. The Kamarakotos must be classed as agricultural Indians.

Plant Foods and Farming.

222 Wild plant food is relatively unimportant and forms only an insignificant
262 addition to the Kamarakoto diet. At least four non-poisonous mushrooms are
known and eaten. I did not hear of any wild roots or seeds that are commonly
eaten. There are a few, surprisingly few, wild fruits that are enjoyed in season,
including the fruits of the maripa and moriche palms, called aba and kwai
respectively, and several sorts of guamos, pods with a sweetish edible pulp sur-
rounding the hard seeds (warwoto, maipa, abira), and the algarrobo (wadé)
with somewhat similar pods with a powdery edible substance around the seeds.
These with a fruit called made that I did not identify are almost all the wild
plants that provide food.

244 Cultivated food plants, on the other hand, are numerous and varied.
Some plants, food and otherwise, are generally planted more or less at random
around the houses, notably gourds, cotton, and pupu (a shrub with spiny leaves
and a fleshy fruit that looks like a golden-yellow tomato). Agriculture, proper-
ly speaking, is carried out by a system of mixed, temporary farm-patches, a
wasteful and inefficient type of farming that has been taken over from the
Indians and is common throughout Venezuela where such patches are called
"conucos."

241 The Kamarakoto conuco, uma, is invariably located in the forest, but
311 usually near its edge. The reason for this is that the forest has become estab-
134 lished wherever there is rich soil leaving only the poor, sandy soil open and
242 grass-covered. At Uruyén the to'-esa, Reyes, in an unusual experimental
mood, cleared a patch of sabana and planted casave¹⁰⁷ on it, but when we left
107 [see footnote on p. 119, Category 116 - Analyst]

S: Simpson N-5 (1939) 1940

SS16 Pemou SS16
Kamarakoto

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Fig. 74 — Kamarakoto Women Buying Cloth at Expedition Headquarters.

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439 Indians, but it is my impression that the trade in them is negligible. All of the things listed in this paragraph are usually obtained from the Maquiritares (Maingones), who are the chief market of the Kamarakotos for articles of Indian consumption and the chief Indian source of imports.

439 A word of advice to future explorers in this general region may not be
 435 amiss here. A few groups of Indians, who have had most contact with traders
 171 and missionaries, know the value of coins (not bank notes) and will accept them, but most Indians still will not. The most useful articles of trade, because their value to the Indians is greatest in proportion to their bulk and because it is difficult to saturate the market, are small articles, such as fishhooks and needles, and beads. Beads should be small (within reasonable limits a bead's value is in inverse proportion to its size) and should be mainly or wholly blue and white, other colors being much less prized. Trade cloth should be bright red. Other colors will be accepted, but only if red is not obtainable. The Indian understanding of the value of such articles is very definite and allows the trader a wide margin of profit but does not permit him to set his own unreasonable price. Various flashy novelties may permit enormous profits because the Indians do not know their commercial value — in British Guiana Roth was offered a cow for two finger rings worth sixteen cents, and every traveler has equal or still more impressive stories to tell — but even if the traveler has no conscience in the matter, he runs the risk of finding no market at all for his novelties. 172

439 Like all other rational beings, the Kamarakotos, and the Guiana Indians
 437 in general, try to buy cheaply and sell dearly and with a long tradition of trading they are unlikely to be badly worsted in dealing with articles at all familiar to them. Acting on instructions and on praiseworthy motives but contrary to my personal opinion as to wise policy, our party did not bargain with them and established an excessively high rate for their labor and their products, but this will probably prove to be temporary and future trade should return to a basis more equitable for both sides.

Magic and Religion

121 The activities and beliefs that may be classified as religious in the broadest sense are by far the most difficult to observe and to understand in studying a foreign culture. Even students who have spent years with Carib tribes do not claim full comprehension of their religious beliefs, and it is obvious that my observations can only be superficial. They do, however, suffice to show the general type and trend of such beliefs among the Kamarakotos, despite leaving many details and general problems untouched.

Indian religious systems in general (and, sometimes less clearly, all religions) can be approximately classified as, on one hand, theistic, ritualistic,

172 [see footnote on p. 328, category 116 - Analysis]

Kanaïma.

754
[121] The concept of kanaïma, common to practically all Caribs with some
[124] variations in nomenclature, is a difficult one to grasp. Despite their apparent-
[114] ly complete willingness to do so, the Kamarakotos did not succeed in giving me
any clear-cut definition of a kanaïma, and this appears to have been the ex-
perience of every investigator whose interest was more than superficial and who
did not jump to the conclusion that one aspect of kanaïma was a complete de-
scription (almost all the literature has been summarized by Roth, and Koch-
Grünberg adds interesting observations from the Taupépanes). Clearly the con-
cept is to the Indians themselves very complex and rather vague. The basic
fact is that a kanaïma is hostile as such (i. e. is not a kanaïma with respect to
a person to whom he is not hostile) and that by supernatural means he causes
almost every sort of illness and almost all deaths.

A kanaïma may be a real person but he does not cause injury by physical
but only by magical means and his enmity is usually secret. The Kamarakotos
deny that any members of their tribe are kanaïmaton, although doubtless they
[648] may be such from the point of view of other tribes. Some Maquiritaires are
kanaïmaton to the Kamarakotos and wild or bad Indians, naturally of hostile or
at least foreign tribes, are generally believed to be such.

In this aspect, the activities of a kanaïma are typical of human witchcraft.
The Kamarakotos deny that there are, or at least that they are acquainted with,
any particular spells or magical devices that are used in order to cause harm,
but such a denial is inevitable since confession of such knowledge would be
dangerously near confession that its possessor is a kanaïma. Rather vague re-
[171] ports suggest that such devices are known in other tribes. Thus a Taupépan told
Koch-Grünberg that certain Makuchi kanaïmaton placed the spit of their enemies
in a tube of bamboo and used this in a magic spell to cause death, which finds
[551] exact analogies in European witchcraft. It is highly probable also that the re-
[123] fusals to reveal real names is based, at least in part, on belief that they can be
used magically to harm the possessor, and the excessive caution of the Indians
toward us in this respect hints that they were not quite sure that we were not
kanaïmaton.

[825] Some kanaïmaton are animals, or animals that may appear as men, or
men that may appear as animals. Here the concept falls into the world-wide
wer-animal complex, but even in such a case the harm done is not, as usual
with werewolves and the like, physical but only supernatural.

754
776 There is no sharp distinction between a kanaïma that is a real person and
one that is not. A kanaïma that is believed to be a real person may not be
such in fact. Thus the Kamarakotos believe that there are flesh-and-blood
Indians in nearby forests who are kanaïmaton, but these probably exist only in
the Kamarakoto imagination. Other kanaïmaton, although they appear, if at

177 life and in habits of thought and by things that induce or that follow such more
[291] thorough-going modifications. The aboriginal fringe apron was not essentially modified on the colonial level by the use of glass beads in its manufacture, but the introduction of dresses on the modern level betokens a profound change in the use of clothing and in the psychological attitude toward it and arising from it.

It is possible that the Kamarakotos were exposed to this modern level of innovation by the end of literally colonial times, but if so it did not permanently affect them and no trace of such old direct European influence is now clearly evident. Perhaps in the most exact sense and certainly as regards essential effect on them, Kamarakoto contacts directly with the outer world are about a generation old and have begun to have a profoundly modifying influence only in recent years, or one might almost say months. Five years ago the name "Kamarakoto" was known but the tribe, as a group of real human beings, about whom the cultivated world knew, could only be called undiscovered. In truth the Kamarakotos discovered the outer world, that is, civilized Venezuela, before the world discovered them. While learned men still did not know where or how the Kamarakotos lived, the Kamarakotos already knew quite well where the nearest Venezuelan towns were and what sort of life went on there.

177 On their own initiative they have brought back a great deal from these
185 explorations of their own, which still continue, and this is one of the peculiar and striking factors in their present cultural situation. One or two of the most influential men in the tribe, notably the cacique Alejo Calcaño, have lived for considerable periods in Venezuelan towns, learned Spanish, become conversant with at least the superficial aspects of Venezuelan civilization, and brought this knowledge back to the tribe. To extend and consolidate this influence the cacique himself sent his nephew Antonio Montesdeoca into the settlements to acquire similar knowledge and to return with it to the tribe. The attitude of these men is one of progressivism, as they understand it. They are not willfully destroying the Indian way of life, but their influence is almost constantly to make it conform more and more to the ordinary Venezuelan pattern. The effects are not very apparent as yet, but the nature of this influence from within augurs rapid change. The effects are probably nearly as rapid as would be those of direct contact by the tribe as a whole. At least they are less conducive to antagonism and degeneracy, for they tend to follow the course of adapting new things to the Indian life rather than of uprooting Indian culture faster than it can be replaced, a frequent effect of the usual means of direct action.

177 More direct influence is still more recent and is mainly represented by
● 123 our own expedition and, to less extent, by that of last year. Even when, as was not primarily true in those cases, such expeditions have the purpose of studying the Indians as they are, they inevitably have the effect of considerably upsetting things as they are. They introduce all sorts of goods that would not reach them

- 177 for years over the painful overland route of ordinary Indian trade. They show
● 123 still other and often desirable things in use. They give an example of an alien
and perhaps apparently more desirable way of life. In general they enlarge
horizons very suddenly.

Cultural Stratification

- 178 A result of these successive waves of innovations is to produce a sort of
cultural stratification on three distinct and many less distinct or transitional
levels. A few concrete examples will suggest the general nature of this strati-
fication.

128 15 male children of pure central Kamarakoto stock that I measured can, with
 145 a single exception, be placed with almost complete certainty into three groups
 141 such that the relative ages of the groups are known and it is known that there
 is no overlap between them, even though the relative ages of individuals within
 a single group may still be uncertain. Omitting the one doubtful case, (who
 might belong either in group C or group D), the mean measurements of these
 groups, in comparison with young adults and full adults, are as follows:

Growth in Male Kamarakoto

	a. Mean of 4 children about 3-5 years old	b. Mean of 5 children about 7-9 years old	c. Mean of 5 children about 10-13 years old	d. Mean of 9 young adults	e. Mean of 16 full adults
Head length	171.5	175.8	180.4	182.7	186.9
Head breadth	141.5	146.6	146.2	152.4	154.2
Head index	82.5	83.6	81.0	83.3	82.2
Stature	95.4	126.8	144.7	158.0	160.0
Sitting height	54.0	67.8	75.2	80.9	84.8
Stature less sitting height	41.4	59.0	69.4	74.1	75.2
Span	96.0	122.4	150.2	152.4	155.0
Weight	26.3	58.0	81.0	112.2	122.7

[126] Only eight female children were available for measurement, the females
 [123] in general being less employed by us as workers and somewhat shyer about visit-
 ing our camp, where measurement was practicable. Three of these were of so
 nearly the same age that relative ages could not be certainly judged, but the
 others fell into a clear sequence, as follows:

226
824/114 them would be useful and interesting. Even Roth's excellent summary leaves
114 innumerable doubtful points.

226 120. The supposed danger from poisoned water in this part of South
271 America is thus a figment of the imagination, even more absurd than the danger
of attack with blowguns.

252 121. It is almost universally stated that this juice is a deadly poison and
263 that the purpose of squeezing it out is to remove the poison from the grated
casave. These statements are misleading. The poison would surely lose its
force when the flour was cooked in any case so the pressing is not to remove the
poison but merely to obtain a drier flour from which bread can be made. The
"deadly poisonous" juice is consumed in enormous amounts by the Indians with
no ill effects and is their favorite and most common condiment, rivaled only
by peppers. It is always boiled down first, however, and this doubtless destroys
any poisonous qualities, whatever they may be.

263 122. One or two of the more sophisticated Indians who have seen the
177 crude Venezuelan sugar-loaves, papelón, have attempted to imitate them, but
this sporadic effort has, as yet, no significance.

177 123. An amusing instance is provided by a Taurepán who attempted to
401 devise an imitation of the roll-mill introduced by the missionaries at Santa
407 Elena. He showed us his "invention" with glowing pride, but ruefully confessed
that it would not work, as could have been told beforehand by anyone who had
grasped the mechanical principles involved.

276 124. During our stay native habits were disrupted in this respect by the
● 123 fact that a large stock of cigarettes was used for presents and wages, but I have
124 the impression that smoking, however extensive, is not very intensive, that no
one smokes constantly or to excess.

412 125. Which axes, however, may have been used more for such purposes
as digging than for cutting.

323 126. When I asked whether pots are ever painted, it was patiently ex-
531 plained that to do so would be ridiculous since the design would be hidden by
415 soot the first time the pot was used. Pots are used only for cooking, calabashes
and baskets being used for all the other purposes for which some Indians use
pottery.

291/ 127. Even if we agree, as I do not, that the Caribs wore no clothing
172/ whatever before contact with Europeans. Alejo's date is too late by a century
119/ or two and it is virtually impossible that any authentic tribal memory is as old
as that.

● (123) 128. The women would never visit us except in dresses — I shall show
562/ on a later page that this was because of pride, fashion and authority, and not
because of personal modesty or fear. They either stayed at home in the remoter
places that we did not visit, or borrowed dresses for the occasion. The men
wore trousers if they could, but had no hesitation in visiting us without them.

129. But by the time we left, the cacique was more conventionally
clothed than we were and would have excited no comment on any city street.
No other Indian achieved quite this degree of sartorial splendor.

130. Our party did supply them with some ready-made dresses, but this
is a momentary phase. The women of the tribe as a whole are adopting and
will soon universally wear the homemade costume described.

294/ 131. This and the following paragraph are by my wife, Dr. Anne Roe.
114

171/ 132. In fact many culture traits common to these Indians and the civilized
part of Venezuela are not evidence of Venezuelan influence on the Indians but
of the reverse.

291/ 133. except one Taurepán mosa that was not made for use but as a curio
126/ for a missionary, who supplied the heads. Very misleading data are sometimes
128/ given by such made-to-order specimens and I may emphasize here that I have
described nothing that was not seen actually in use by the Indians and collected
nothing but used objects or, when this was impossible, new ones made for use
and carefully compared with those that had been used. In the field of their
special skills, notably basketry, the Indians can and will supply almost anything
that a collector wants, but if he describes what he wishes and has it made to
order, the result is likely to be definitely non-Indian in form and design.

114/ 134. If I understand Roth correctly (this passage is not entirely clear to
301/ me), he considers the belief that these bands permanently groove the limbs
304/ "ridiculous" and "physiologically impossible" "delusions." Nevertheless it is
a fact, fully proven by the plainly visible effects of the bands even when the
bands themselves have been removed.

534
171 165. Panpipes are so widespread that this omission is striking, but I can find no evidence for their occurrence anywhere in this immediate group of tribes.

482
171 166. Kamarakoto women follow the universal custom of Venezuela and adjacent regions in carrying weighty objects balanced on the head for short distances, but not for long carries as when traveling.

[114] 167. Here again Nordenskiöld's generalizations are not correct as applied to our area despite his encyclopedic knowledge and general accuracy. He considers chest-straps typical of this region and head-straps as mainly or wholly western in South America.

601 168. yakon is the same word as akon. The y is not here used only in compounds, being part of a disjunctive form as well, but it is not consistently used to distinguish a male from a female relationship.

[171] 169. The Kamarakotos are aware of the fact that this word is peculiar to them and told me that the Gran Sabana Indians address their mothers as amai, but that this is not a Kamarakoto word.

● 123
674 170. Our camp with its overflowing abundance of desirable and poorly or not guarded objects must have presented an almost irresistible temptation, but on the whole the sorely tried honesty of the Indians was equal to the test. It is true that a few small objects were stolen, or perhaps appropriated would be a fairer word — in some cases it must have been confusing to the Indians to know what desirable objects, such as spent cartridges, were fair prey and what were not. In one case application to the cacique procured the return of an appropriated object with the explanation that it had been believed abandoned. At least one valuable small object, a gold pencil, disappeared permanently.

123
436 171. When we started trading with them, the Indians wanted no money
439 except a few small silver coins to use as ornaments and they complained that a previous party had wanted to pay them in money, which was useless to them. When they eventually learned the value (to us) of Venezuelan coins and that they could spend the coins with us for goods of real value, they gladly accepted them. It was not uncommon for an Indian worker to ask for his pay in silver and then to reappear in an hour or so and spend it all for trade goods, which he could have had in the first place without using the money. This developed into a delightful game amusing to everyone but our paymaster. See Fig. 74.²

¹ [For Fig 74, see p. 228a, category 116 - Analysis]

435 172. The literature, especially that of travel as opposed to scientific study, is full of ridicule of the Indians because they do not know the intrinsic worth of articles. These statements are usually naive because they show that it is the traveler, who did not know what "intrinsic worth" means. Except for jewelry and a few other uses unknown to the Indians, gold has no intrinsic worth. In our civilization, but not that of the Indians, it has an extrinsic worth as a token of the real value that it in itself does not intrinsically have. When an Indian picks up a nugget and trades it for a needle, he gets by far the best of the bargain on the basis of intrinsic worth: he gets something that he could not make and that is of great use to him for something that cost him no real work and that is worthless to him, and so gets something for nothing. It must not be supposed, however, that there are any Indians left, even beyond the limits of intensive exploration, who do not now have a better idea than this of the value (to the traveler) of gold, or of other articles of regular trade.

114 173. Koch-Grünberg, who seems to have penetrated farther than anyone
786 else into Carib religion, gives the texts of several Taurepán magic spells, but these were apparently common property and not exclusive to the piaches.

114 174. No mention was ever made of the use of a rattle, maraka, by the
534 piache and since this is almost universal and is indeed believed by some to be
785 the primary purpose of the maraka, I feared that I had missed an essential point.
[171] I now learn, however, on Koch-Grünberg's unimpeachable authority that
Taurepán piaches do not use the maraka, and this must be true also of the Ka-
marakoto.

754 175. The following remarkable incident was related to me by Marie
● 123 Angel as having occurred during her previous visit to the tribe. One of the boys
employed at the camp was seized by a kanaima and retired to his hammock to
die. All entreaties to him fell on deaf ears and Mrs. Angel finally said in his
presence, through an interpreter, that if he was going to die anyway she was
not going to have him do so at length in her camp, that she was going to get a
gun and if he was still in his hammock when she returned, she would put him
out of his misery. When she approached with the gun, the boy suddenly sprang
from the hammock and ran off, entirely cured. Since Indians do certainly die
from such attacks, this anecdote is not to be taken as evidence that they are
feigned.

764 176. But I did not open these because this would certainly have been re-
123 sented and the friendship of the living was far more essential to my work than
this slight additional knowledge of the dead.

334

171 of ticks (which is highly doubtful), but the same thing is done where it is obvious-
 372 ly and wholly harmful and there is little doubt that this is merely attempted
 311 rationalization of an essentially irrational custom.

272 231. This ¹belongs to the colonial level in the sense that it was invented
 273 in colonial times ¹to deal with a colonial introduction of new foodstuff, but to
 176 the aboriginal level in the sense that it was a purely Indian invention without
 177 direct European influence.
 409

177 232. Of course this ²may be a modern introduction in this tribe, but it
 235 belongs generally to the colonial level.

178 233. This instrument ³and its unchanged survival are emphasized because
 534 in many tribes the flageolet, or similar flute-like instrument, was definitely
 179 modified under European influence, but the Kamarakotos retain the purely
 aboriginal form.

114 234. As discussed elsewhere, some students believe that these ⁴belong to
 343 what I here call the colonial level, but I believe them to be aboriginal.

000 235. I do not speak here of the strictly religious aspects of this work,
 matters of opinion which it is not my business to discuss. Regardless of their
 own intentions, the work of missionaries always has widespread results also in
 the non-religious sphere which may legitimately be studied and evaluated quite
 aside from belief in any creed. These results are sometimes admirable, but it
 is an open secret that they are also sometimes deplorable. One may share the
 opinion that it is better to believe in Christ than in kanaima and still believe
 that it is better to retain native skills than to be taught to depend on insecure
 importation.

Similarly in speaking later of how little the Indians have to gain from
 the process of "civilization," religion is entirely excluded from the discussion
 and no judgment of its value to the Indians is implied.

236. These and the other suggestions made are not theoretical abstractions.
 Examples of impoverishment by the contrary policy can be cited not only from
 Venezuela but also from every country in the Americas.

● 123 237. Some reluctance was encountered but every person whom I asked
 126 finally accepted. In the midst of operations, when all scruples seemed to have
 been conquered, the tribe suddenly and unanimously refused to be measured
 any more. On investigation, I finally learned that this was because the English
 numeral "eight," which I had several times called out to my wife or to

¹ [i.e. the cane press - Analyst]

² [i.e. chickens - Analyst]

⁴ [i.e. square shelters - Analyst]

³ [i.e. the flageolet - Analyst]

P

- 123 Mrs. Angel to write down, closely resembles the Kamarakoto words for "die"
 126 or "dead." I went over to Uruyén, gathered some of the Indians, explained what "eight" means, and to prove it and reassure them taught some of them to count from one to ten in English — an accomplishment that may puzzle future visitors. They then returned to be measured and no further serious difficulty arose.

M

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238. He has only one woman estimated to be older than 25 but younger than 40, and I have omitted her from the partial averages given above. His male series does not have such a gap.

239. Thirty-three for head measurements, 30 for the others

240. Thirteen for head measurements, 10 for others

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241. Farabee's outstanding general conclusion was that forest tribes are larger than sabana tribes regardless of race, i. e. that forest Caribs more resemble forest Arawaks than they do sabana Caribs. He believes that the difference is an effect of environment, especially food. That the somatic differences of these various tribes are to some extent influenced by environment is possible, even probable, but Farabee's conclusion does not follow from his own figures if these are more carefully and correctly examined, and it is quite disproven by the present new data. Although manifestly allied to the Makuchis and just as typically sabana Indians, the Arekunas are at least as large as any of Farabee's forest Caribs, or even Arawaks, which may average a little larger than Caribs in this region. Since Farabee's sabana Caribs are simply the Makuchis, his data would tend to show not an influence of environment regardless of race, as he supposes, but a strictly racial difference. His figures merely suggested, and mine confirm, that the Makuchis are small Caribs, not that sabana Indians are small.

Moreover he has drawn conclusions that his data cannot prove, even if these conclusions are true. His samples of forest tribes are for the most part very inadequate and potentially misleading, and these tribes apparently differ considerably among themselves so that to lump them as one thing and to compare this very arbitrary and artificial average with the Makuchis, a good sample that is of one tribe, can prove nothing. He has also failed to show that his sample differences are significant regarding the populations, or even to consider this problem. It is evident that very few of them, even those used as a basis for strong conclusions, are really significant.